

I was never too much with the ladies.  
she stuck an olive in her mouth and laughed,  
and the editor, one of them, told how he used to  
put a stepladder up against a peek-hole in a  
New York apartment and watch this man and women  
work out, and I stuck an olive in my mouth and  
laughed, and the lady I had failed with, she looked  
very beautiful and I wasn't drunk then, and I thought,  
ah ah, I could get you now, yes yes, I could!  
but anyhow, I came back to Los Angeles, and she  
wrote me once or twice, I saw one of her poems in a  
rather good magazine and then I forgot all about  
it, until the other day I heard from one of the editors:  
you remember Loraine? she's made a lot of money on  
real estate and now she weighs close to 200 pounds  
and runs with women ...  
my beautiful Loraine laughing  
my naked Loraine on the leather couch  
with the rain coming down outside,  
200 pounds, flat shoes, no makeup, smoking small  
cigars and laughing like a cowboy ...  
Loraine, damn you, god  
damn you  
you've marched to the  
gallows.

the butcher

the butcher has one eye  
and his hands and face are very red  
and there is red on his apron  
and he leans on the counter --  
"yes sir?"  
the butcher waits to see my taste in meat  
but most of the meat is about purple  
and he reads my thinking:  
"meat's no good until it's  
aged."  
I really want to walk away from his meat  
but I am not strong enough to  
injure him.  
"just give me a pound of bacon," I say  
and he gives me a bastardly look and picks up a  
package, wraps it.  
"89 cents," he says and I lay the dollar down  
and he comes back with a dime and a penny  
and there's blood on his hands,  
and on the left hand  
a white bandage is slipping off  
on the finger next to the thumb.  
I take the bacon and the eleven cents  
and as I walk away

he hates me  
and I escape past loaves of bread and green  
onions  
to the signal on the corner  
which reads  
red.

my landlady

my landlady comes down  
usually after one a.m.  
after her husband crawls to bed  
drunk and I am also about  
finished --  
pssst! she goes, pssst! it's me!  
I peek out the  
door.  
look, Mrs. Hansen, I've had enough,  
I'm finished.  
o, you damn fool! open the door!  
I  
open the door.  
here! take these!  
she has 3 quarts of beer.  
I laugh.  
I'll be back!  
I open a quart and sit in a  
chair.  
psst! pssst!  
now she's at the back  
door.  
3 more quarts.  
take these!  
I put them in the  
refrigerator.  
I take a quart to her.  
she's sitting in my favorite  
chair.  
you damn fool, what you been  
doing?  
nothing. kind of going  
crazy.  
you damn fool, I told you not to  
quit that post office  
job! but you wouldn't listen to an old woman,  
would you?  
well, it's not that  
bad.  
but you had security! you had  
SECURITY!  
you can get security in a jail,  
Mrs. Hansen.